Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1. (currently amended) A frying apparatus, said frying apparatus comprising:
a container having an open top for holding foods and oil;
a lid covering on top of said container for closing up said open top of said container;
heating means for heating said foods and oil disposed inside said container;
stirring means installed inside said container for stirring foods;
wherein said stirring means is removably installed adjacent the bottom of said container, has a lower edge disposed above the bottom of said container at a predetermined clearance, and is adapted to rotate around a substantially vertical axis;
a power-drive assembly operationally coupled with said stirring means for driving said stirring means through repeating stirring cycles; [and]
a coupling device engaged with said stirring means and adapted for lockably receiving a driving shaft;
control means for automatically de-energizing said power-drive assembly near the end of each stirring cycle for a predetermined dwell period[.] ; and
wherein said control means controls said power-drive assembly to drive said stirring means to perform an intermittent stirring operation across foods.

2. (currently amended) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein said control means includes transistor means for de-energizing said power-drive assembly ~~when said transistor means is turned off~~ and energizing said power-drive assembly ~~when said transistor means is turned on~~.

3. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 2, wherein said control means includes capacitor timing means to determine said predetermined dwell period.

4. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 3, wherein said control means includes switch means responsive to the position of said power-drive assembly for conditioning said capacitor timing means to bias said transistor means off for said predetermined dwell period near the end of each of said stirring cycles.

5. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 2, wherein said control means includes variable resistor means connected to said transistor means for varying said predetermined dwell period.

6. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 2, wherein said control means includes manually activated switch means for turning on said transistor means for providing continuously repeating stirring cycles without dwell periods.

7. (currently amended) A frying apparatus, said frying apparatus comprising:
a container having an open top for holding foods and oil;
a lid covering on top of said container for closing up said open top of said container;
heating means for heating said foods and oil disposed inside said container;
stirring means installed inside said container for stirring foods;
<u>wherein said stirring means is removably installed adjacent the bottom of said container, has a lower edge disposed above the bottom of said container at a predetermined clearance, and is adapted to rotate around a substantially vertical axis;</u>
a power-drive assembly operationally coupled with said stirring means for driving said stirring means through repeating stirring cycles; [and]
<u>a coupling device engaged with said stirring means and adapted for lockably receiving a driving shaft; and</u>
a venting device for exhausting cooking fumes.

8. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 7, wherein said venting device includes filter means for cooking fume treatment.

9. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 7, said frying apparatus further including a blowing device for forcing fresh air into said frying apparatus during the frying process, thereby, facilitating moisture removal from inside said frying apparatus.

10. (currently amended) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 7, said frying apparatus further including control means for automatically de-energizing said power-drive assembly near the end of each stirring cycle for a predetermined dwell period[.], and wherein said control means controls said power-drive assembly to drive said stirring means to perform an intermittent stirring operation across foods.

11. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 9, wherein said blowing device includes a one-way valve for preventing cooking fumes from escaping therethrough.

12. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 9, said frying apparatus further including control means for automatically de-energizing said power-drive assembly near the end of each stirring cycle for a predetermined dwell period.

13. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 9, said frying apparatus further including control means, said control means dividing the blowing operation of said blowing device into repeating blowing cycles of predetermined length and automatically de-energizing said blowing device near the end of each blowing cycle for a predetermined dwell period.

14. (original) A frying apparatus, said frying apparatus comprising:
a container having an open top and an upstanding inner cylindrical wall for holding foods and oil;

a lid covering on top of said container for closing up said open top of said container;
heating means for heating said foods and oil disposed inside said container;
stirring means installed inside said container for stirring foods;
a power-drive assembly disposed below said container and operationally coupled with said stirring means for driving said stirring means through repeating stirring cycles; and
a coupling device having an inner cylindrical wall and an outer cylindrical wall, engaged with each other on the upper portion thereof, wherein said outer cylindrical wall of said coupling device is routed over said upstanding inner cylindrical wall of said container and the lower portion of said outer cylindrical wall of said coupling device is engaged with said stirring means, and wherein said inner cylindrical wall of said coupling device includes a coupling element on the lower portion thereof for lockably receiving a drive shaft from said power-drive assembly.

15. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 14, wherein said container includes co-rotation preventing means installed inside said container on the sidewall thereof for preventing food pieces from co-rotating with said stirring means, as said stirring means rotates.

16. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 14, wherein said container includes supporting means installed on the inside bottom thereof for supporting said stirring means, thereby avoiding excessive scraping of said stirring means on the bottom of said container, reducing the friction therebetween, and prolonging the life of said stirring means.

17. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 14, wherein said drive shaft includes supporting means installed on the upper portion thereof for operationally supporting said drive shaft against said upstanding inner cylindrical wall of said container.

18. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 14, said frying apparatus further including control means for automatically de-energizing said power-drive assembly near the end of each stirring cycle for a predetermined dwell period.

19. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 14, said frying apparatus further including a basket having an open top and a central aperture on the bottom thereof removably receiving said upstanding inner cylindrical wall of said container for use to deep-fry foods.

20. (currently amended) A frying apparatus, said frying apparatus comprising:
a container having an open top and a central aperture on the bottom thereof for holding foods and oil;
a lid covering on top of said container for closing up said open top of said container;
heating means for heating said foods and oil disposed inside said container;
stirring means installed inside said container for stirring foods;
wherein said stirring means is removably installed adjacent the bottom of said container, has a lower edge disposed above the bottom of said container at a predetermined clearance, and is adapted to rotate around a substantially vertical axis;
a power-drive assembly disposed below said container and operationally coupled with said stirring means for driving said stirring means through repeating stirring cycles, said power-drive assembly including a drive shaft threading through said central aperture of said container;
~~sealing means~~ a sealing assembly installed on the bottom of said container and in substantially the proximity of the central bottom of said container for sealing between the bottom of said container and said drive shaft; and
a coupling device having a hollow cylindrical lower portion, wherein said hollow cylindrical lower portion is engaged with said stirring means, and wherein said hollow cylindrical lower portion includes a coupling element for lockably receiving said drive shaft from said power-drive assembly.

21. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 20, wherein said container includes co-rotation preventing means installed inside said container on the sidewall thereof for preventing food pieces from co-rotating with said stirring means, as said stirring means rotates.

22. (currently amended) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 20, wherein said sealing ~~means~~ assembly is installed inside said container at a predetermined height, such that for most applications of said frying apparatus said sealing [means] assembly is above boiling oil or hot ~~liquid~~ liquids, whereby the requirement on said sealing ~~means~~ assembly is significantly reduced.

23. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 20, wherein said container includes supporting means installed on the inside bottom thereof for supporting said stirring means, thereby, avoiding excessive scraping of said stirring means on the bottom of said container, reducing the friction therebetween, and prolonging the life of said stirring means.

24. (currently amended) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 20, said frying apparatus further including control means for automatically de-energizing said power-drive assembly near the end of each stirring cycle for a predetermined dwell period [.], and wherein said control means controls said power-drive assembly to drive said stirring means to perform an intermittent stirring operation across foods.

25. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 20, said frying apparatus further including a basket having an open top and a central aperture on the bottom thereof removably receiving said drive shaft for use to deep-fry foods.

26. (original) A frying apparatus, said frying apparatus comprising:
a container having an open top, a closed bottom, and an upstanding central shaft installed on the central bottom thereof for holding foods and oil;

a lid covering on top of said container for closing up said open top of said container;
heating means for heating said foods and oil disposed inside said container;
stirring means installed inside said container for stirring foods;
a power-drive assembly disposed above said container and operationally coupled with said stirring means for driving said stirring means through repeating stirring cycles; and
a coupling device having a hollow cylindrical lower portion for removably receiving said upstanding central shaft, wherein said hollow cylindrical lower portion of said coupling device is engaged with said stirring means, and wherein said coupling device includes a coupling element on the upper portion thereof for operationally transferring rotation power from said power-drive assembly to stirring means.

27. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 26, wherein said container includes co-rotation preventing means installed inside said container on the sidewall thereof for preventing food pieces from co-rotating with said stirring means, as said stirring means rotates.

28. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 26, wherein said container includes supporting means installed on the inside bottom thereof for supporting said stirring means, thereby, avoiding excessive scraping of said stirring means on the bottom of said container, reducing the friction therebetween, and prolonging the life of said stirring means.

29. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 26, said frying apparatus further including control means for automatically de-energizing said power-drive assembly near the end of each stirring cycle for a predetermined dwell period.

30. (original) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 26, said frying apparatus further including a basket having an open top and a central aperture on the bottom

thereof removably receiving said upstanding central shaft for use to deep-fry foods.

31. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein each of said stirring cycles comprises up to one round of rotation of said stirring means.

32. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein each of said stirring cycles comprises a plurality of rounds of rotation of said stirring means.

33. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 1, said frying apparatus further including a housing, wherein said container is removably disposed inside said housing, and whereby it is easier to load and unload foods and to clean said container after use.

34. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 7, said frying apparatus further including a housing, wherein said container is removably disposed inside said housing, and whereby it is easier to load and unload foods and to clean said container after use.

35. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 7, wherein said venting device is installed on said lid, and wherein said venting device includes a fabric or paper filter for capturing the grease content in cooking fumes.

36. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 8, wherein said filter means includes a metal mesh filter for capturing the grease content in cooking fumes, and wherein said metal mesh filter is washable and reusable.

37. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 36, wherein said filter means includes a fabric or paper filter for capturing the grease content in cooking fumes.

38. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 8, wherein said filter means includes a fabric or paper filter for capturing the grease content in cooking fumes.

39. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 8, wherein said filter means includes a activated carbon filter for capturing the grease content and removing cooking odors in cooking fumes.

40. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 14, wherein said upstanding inner cylindrical wall of said container extends upwards to a predetermined height above the bottom of said container, and said frying apparatus further including a sealing assembly for sealing between said drive shaft from said power-drive assembly and the upper portion of said upstanding inner cylindrical wall of said container.

41. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 40, wherein said sealing assembly includes a compression-packing adapted to be squeezed against said drive shaft from said power-drive assembly and the upper portion of said upstanding inner cylindrical wall of said container for generating a sealing thereof.

42. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 20, wherein said sealing assembly includes a compression-packing adapted to be squeezed against said drive shaft from said power-drive assembly and said central aperture on the bottom of said container for generating a sealing thereof.

43. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 42, wherein said sealing assembly is installed on the bottom of said container and disposed underneath the bottom of said container.

44. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 42, wherein said sealing assembly is installed on the bottom of said container and disposed inside said container, wherein said compression-packing is disposed at a predetermined height above

the bottom of said container, whereby for most applications of said frying apparatus said compression-packing is disposed above boiling oil or hot liquids, and whereby the requirement on said sealing assembly is significantly reduced.

45. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 20, said frying apparatus further including control means for controlling various functions of said frying apparatus, whereby frying processes can be accomplished in a programmed automatic manner for minimizing human involvement and chore in preparing foods.

46. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 42, said frying apparatus further including control means for controlling various functions of said frying apparatus, whereby frying processes can be accomplished in a programmed automatic manner for minimizing human involvement and chore in preparing foods.

47. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 20, said frying apparatus further including a venting device for exhausting cooking fumes.

48. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 47, wherein said venting device includes a metal mesh filter for capturing the grease content in cooking fumes, and wherein said metal mesh filter is washable and reusable.

49. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 47, wherein said venting device includes a fabric or paper filter for capturing the grease content in cooking fumes.

50. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 47, wherein said venting device includes an activated carbon filter for capturing the grease content and removing cooking odors in cooking fumes.

51. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 42, said frying apparatus further including a venting device for exhausting cooking fumes.

52. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 51, wherein said venting device includes a metal mesh filter for capturing the grease content in cooking fumes, and wherein said metal mesh filter is washable and reusable.

53. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 51, wherein said venting device includes a fabric or paper filter for capturing the grease content in cooking fumes.

54. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 51, wherein said venting device includes an activated carbon filter for capturing the grease content and removing cooking odors in cooking fumes.

55. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 20, said frying apparatus further including a blowing device for forcing fresh air into said frying apparatus during frying processes, thereby, facilitating moisture removal from inside said frying apparatus.

56. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 20, said frying apparatus further including a housing, wherein said container is removably disposed inside said housing, and whereby it is easier to load and unload foods and to clean said container after use.

57. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 42, said frying apparatus further including a housing, wherein said container is removably disposed inside said housing, and whereby it is easier to load and unload foods and to clean said container after use.

58. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 56, wherein said drive shaft includes a coupling mechanism disposed on the lower portion thereof for lockbly receiving a shaft from said power-drive assembly.

59. (new) A frying apparatus as defined in claim 57, wherein said drive shaft includes a coupling mechanism disposed on the lower portion thereof for lockbly receiving a shaft from said power-drive assembly.